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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 000897

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SUBJECT: GOR CONCERNED ABOUT MOLDOVA RIOTS; DUMA COMPARES
TO COLORED REVOLUTIONS

Classified By: A/Pol M/C Margaret Hawthorne for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (SBU) Summary: While the GOR is concerned about the unrest in Moldova, and the MFA alluded to possible Romanian connections of the protesters, it has not made as direct accusations as Duma members have, who freely compared the riots to a new "color revolution." Experts do not think the West has masterminded the riots, while the press detected an anti-Russian angle to the protests. End Summary.

GOR concerned, fingers Romania

12. (SBU) In a telephone call with Moldovan President Voronin April 7, President Medvedev called for the peaceful settlement of the situation in Moldova, the reestablishment of order, and observance of the law and constitutional norms. This phone call came only a day after Medvedev called Voronin to congratulate him on the results of the election, expressing his hope for constructive and friendly cooperation between the countries.

13. (SBU) The MFA condemned the riots and indirectly accused Romania of supporting the protesters against the incumbent leadership, noting "the abundance of Romanian flags in the hands of the rioters," whose aim was to "blacken the achievements of the past several years." In a press conference April 8, Foreign Minister Lavrov turned that against the EU, saying, "We all saw under what flags these riots were conducted and we hope that serious conclusions were drawn by the European Union." However, the MFA concluded that the protesters were "left without their masterminds" and expressed hope that only few would "associate themselves with the anarchic actions." Earlier, the MFA had confirmed Russia considered the elections to have been conducted "in full compliance with democratic and legal norms."

Duma accuses Romania, compares to color revolutions

14. (SBU) Duma members were even more outspoken in their criticism of Romania. In discussions to demand that parliaments of Romania and the European Union strongly condemn the "anti-constitutional actions by Moldova's opposition," Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, deputy speaker of the State Duma (LDP), stated the demonstrations had been "paid for by Romanian special services," while Konstantin Zatulin cautioned that "we cannot insist so far that the Romanian authorities are taking part," but noted "certain representatives of Romanian political circles are taking part in these events."

15. (SBU) Referring to the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, Deputy Valeriy Rushkin (CPRF) called the unrest "another project of the orange pest," while United Russia's Vladimir Pekhtin compared the riots he said had been caused by an "external influence" to the color revolutions, which he charged aimed to "weaken Russia's influence" and ensure that "no pro-Russian states remained around Russia." Sergei Markov called the events in Chisinau "one more orange revolution," which was supported by Romanian "radical nationalistic groups," although he did not think the government of Romania was involved.

Experts deny Western involvement

16. (SBU) While Nashi youth movement commissioner Konstantin Goloskokov said that the actions in Chisinau had been provoked by the West in order to put a strain on Russian-Moldovan relations, others agreed the West was not masterminding the unrest and rejected the notion of another "colored revolution." Deputy Director of the Center of Political Technologies Aleksey Makarkin said the reaction from the West showed it was not involved, while color revolutions were peaceful, unlike the situation in Moldova. Russian Public Chamber member Vyacheslav Nikonov believed the rioting in Chisinau was staged by NGOs financed from Romania and "some other countries and organizations."

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Press discusses anti-Russia angle

17. (SBU) The press was quick to note a possible anti-Russian angle to the protests. While Kommersant pointed out that Voronin had attracted Russian pop stars to support him and given extensive interviews to Russian journalists for broadcast in Moldova, RBK Daily claimed the protests showed Moscow was continuing to lose its influence in its neighborhood and quoted an unnamed source in the MFA as saying the GOR ignored MFA warnings that Voronin was "bluffing" about being an ally of Russia. Instead, the GOR allowed Russia's efforts in Transnistria to go unnoticed by ceding leadership on that issue to Voronin.

Comment

18. (C) At this point, Russian officials, aside from the Duma, are not equating the situation in Moldova with the color revolutions, but if the situation worsens, the tendency to do so will surely grow.
BEYRLE